



INDIANA PROSECUTING ATTORNEYS COUNCIL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Delaware County Prosecutor Supports Charges for Meth-Related Fires

Delaware County Prosecutor Jeff Arnold testified last week in support of a bill before the House Courts and Criminal Code Committee that creates criminal charges for fires started and/or other property damage caused during the manufacture of methamphetamine. The bill, H.B. 1211, is sponsored by Rep. Martin Carbaugh.

“The meth manufacturing process creates harmful chemicals and gases that statistically explode seven percent of the time,” said Prosecutor Arnold. “There is no offense under current law to address the damage and fires caused by meth cooks. Passage of this bill will assist Indiana prosecutors in charging these people for the damages they cause.”

The crime, under the criminal mischief code, would be a Level 6 felony. The charges may be enhanced to a more serious Level 4 felony if the fire caused damage to a structure without the consent of the property owner or lives were endangered. Without a charge for meth-related fires, Indiana fire departments have not routinely tracked these fires with specificity. It was estimated that with approximately 1,500 meth labs in Indiana in 2016, about 100 fires in the state would have been directly attributable to meth labs.

The bill will go to the Indiana House this week for further consideration.

END

About the Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council: The IPAC is a non-partisan, independent state judicial branch agency that supports Indiana's 91 prosecuting attorneys and their chief deputies. It is governed by a 10-member board of directors of elected prosecuting attorneys. The IPAC assists prosecuting attorneys in the preparation of manuals, legal research and training seminars. It serves as a liaison to local, state, and federal agencies, study commissions, and community groups in an effort to support law enforcement and promote the fair administration of justice.

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